

Episcopal Public Policy Network
For the Beauty of the Earth

Climate Change and Global Poverty

"This cycle – poverty that begets climate change, and vice versa – threatens the future of all people, rich and poor alike, and of all things in the world that God so loves."

- The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori

The impact of climate change extends far beyond America's borders. Among its most severe effects is the exacerbation of the reach of global poverty, the killer of 30,000 of God's people around the world each day.

The Episcopal Church has pledged to make the fight against global poverty a mission priority during the current triennium through engagement in advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN Development Program calls climate change one of the most significant threats to the achievement of the MDGs.

What are the effects?

Simply put, global poverty and climate change fuel one another, making each problem significantly more deadly. Rising temperatures around the world have increased the frequency of natural disasters and taxed the ability of poor countries to fight ongoing challenges related to poverty and disease. Conversely, as poor countries seek to lift themselves out of poverty, they must provide reliable-energy sources for their citizens, and financial necessity often forces them to choose sources like oil and coal that threaten to increase significantly the world's greenhouse emissions. Extreme poverty also destabilizes countries and regions thus increasing global instability and insecurity.

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/climate>

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What can we do?

Currently, the most prominent climate change legislation in Congress is a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA) called **America's Climate Security Act (S. 2191)**. This legislation does two important things for global poverty:

- (1) It provides for a critical reduction in our nation's own greenhouse-gas emissions
- (2) It provides funding specifically targeted to assist poor people around the world already facing consequences from global warming. The world's poorest nations desperately need this assistance to adapt to severe climate changes

What does the Episcopal Church say?

In her testimony before a Senate committee, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori stated:

"At the very beginning of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, we hear of God's creation of the universe and his proclamation that the whole of it is very good. Ultimately, this story is an account of relationships: the bond of love between God and the world, and the interconnectivity of all people and all things in that world. It is only when we take seriously those relationships -- when we realize that all people have a stake in the health and well-being of all others and of the Earth itself -- that creation can truly begin to realize the abundant life that God intends for every one of us."

Lenten Discipline: *Advocacy is Action*

This week, write your members of congress urging them to support legislation that provides for a critical reduction in our nation's own greenhouse-gas emissions that cause climate change and exacerbate the effects of global poverty around the world. **It is easy to contact your members of congress when you are a member of the EPPN – we more information and an easily personalized sample letter online at episcopalchurch.org/eppn.**

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